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Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 64/226. It provides a status report and an analysis of the current challenges to the delivery of relief and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in compliance with its resolution 64/226, in which it requested the Secretary-General to encourage relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to provide assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly in the areas of education for orphans, medical care and treatment for victims of sexual violence, including HIV-positive victims, trauma and psychological counselling, skills training and microcredit programmes; to support activities aimed at genocide victim remembrance and genocide prevention; and to support efforts to enhance judicial capacity-building.

II. Review of major developments

2. Seventeen years after the tragic events that occurred in Rwanda, the country has steadily recovered and is on the path to a more promising future. Indeed, Rwanda has made tremendous socio-economic progress and institutional transformation since the 1994 genocide. Overall, Rwanda's economic performance continues on track. Growth is mainly driven by the services sector, which is the biggest contributor of Rwanda's gross domestic product (GDP). Growth in the services sector was largely driven by the telecommunications sector and the development of the wholesale and retail trade, as well as transport and tourism. In addition, structural reforms have helped to maintain both good macroeconomic performance and substantial improvements in the social indicators.

3. Rwanda has made remarkable progress in the area of peace and reconciliation, restoration of law and order, and democratization. Similarly, the country has made very significant advances and has shown a strong commitment to rebuilding and strengthening national capacity for good governance, through institutional capacity-building, law and order, public sector reform and decentralization, and anti-corruption measures. Fostering and promoting democratic governance is a major development agenda for the Government of Rwanda and the United Nations, and hence governance issues are defined as priorities in both Vision 2020 and the economic development and poverty reduction strategy.

4. Rwanda's economy has experienced sharp growth since the end of the 1990s. Its strong performance has been driven by prudent reforms and public expenditure management, supported by good economic governance, strong performance in the services and agriculture sectors, and significant public and private investments. Rwanda, like most countries in the developing world, has also been affected by the global commodity price escalation and the financial crisis. As a result, growth slipped from 11.5 per cent in 2008 to 6.1 per cent in 2009 before reaching 7.5 per cent in 2010. In 2011, GDP is expected to increase by 7 per cent, mainly driven by the growth in the services sector.

5. Overall, poverty fell from 60.5 per cent in 2000/01 to 57 per cent in 2005/06. There was also a decline in the levels of infant and maternal mortality, HIV infection and malaria. Primary school enrolment has increased and nutrition levels have improved. Rwanda is a leader in gender equality, surpassing all countries in the world in female representation in Parliament and in executive positions in Government, including at the ministerial level. The most recent data show that

Rwanda is on track to achieving the Millennium Development Goals on primary school enrolment, gender equality and reduction of child mortality.

III. Current challenges to development

6. Despite the impressive progress over the years, enormous challenges remain and a lot still has to be done to address some of the significant challenges facing Rwanda, in order to ensure a steady path of sustainable development and accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, despite high economic growth, poverty rates have not fallen proportionately, declining only by 3 percentage points, from 60 per cent (2000) to 56.9 per cent (2006), according to the Rwanda Integrated Living Conditions Survey 2005-2006. Achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 will require a focus on increasing rural incomes and agricultural output.

7. Rwanda is equally confronted with other challenges, including high population growth and fertility rates of about 2.7 per cent per year and 4.99 children per woman of reproductive age, respectively; high maternal mortality rates of about 750 deaths per 100,000 women giving birth; and high levels of malnutrition among children. The combination of high population growth rates and poverty impose a lot of pressure on the limited natural resource base, particularly land, resulting in incidences of food insecurity in some parts of the country. Furthermore, HIV continues to threaten Rwanda's economic and social fabric, undermining efforts to reduce poverty. While Rwanda has a strong policy and planning framework for achieving Vision 2020 and Millennium Development Goal targets for health and HIV/AIDS, effective implementation of these instruments is challenged by insufficient investment and insufficient human resource capacity.

8. Insufficient investment in infrastructure for energy, water and sanitation, and transportation, coupled with the combined pressures of agricultural production, high population growth, economic expansion and rising energy needs, put an increasing environmental stress on Rwanda. Consequently, there is a need for adequate financing and capacity-strengthening in order for the Government to deliver the necessary services in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

9. Promoting shared economic growth and poverty reduction are important priorities of the Government of Rwanda in order to meet the long-term national development objective of building a middle-income country by 2020. The Government has developed social protection strategies aimed at uplifting the very poor in the communities. The Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme, with three key pillars — the public works programme, direct cash transfers and a microcredit scheme — aims to operationalize Vision 2020 and the economic development and poverty reduction strategy, and to directly reduce poverty at the community level, through the creation of employment opportunities for poor people and by providing cash to the poorest and most vulnerable households. The Government is also implementing the "one cow per family" programme to improve the income-earning potential of households. The Programme initiative has contributed to addressing the direct needs and demands of the population, especially the poorest and marginalized groups, while also providing the necessary space for local Government action and involvement in the efficient delivery of public services. Supported by the *Imihigo* system (performance contracts), the programme has helped to reinforce

accountability mechanisms in tracking the performance of local Governments and other service delivery agents.

10. The Government of Rwanda has made achieving the Millennium Development Goals central to its policy framework, as defined in the economic development and poverty reduction strategy for 2008-2012. The Government continues to demonstrate strong leadership and ownership of the development processes by implementing several mechanisms to enhance aid effectiveness and coordination among development partners, as well as facilitating a favourable environment for effective development cooperation. This provides a tremendous opportunity for the United Nations and development partners to support the Government in its efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Specific investment opportunities exist in the areas of modern inputs for increasing agricultural production, small-scale water management, access to energy and roads, improved environmental sustainability, and scaling up basic health care, including family planning services.

11. Rwanda's long-term development goals are contained in Vision 2020 and the economic development and poverty reduction strategy for 2008-2012. The overriding long-term national development objective is to transform Rwanda into a middle-income country by 2020 with a knowledge-based economy. The Government continues to implement an ambitious reform programme for poverty reduction.

IV. United Nations support

12. In the area of conflict prevention, the United Nations provides assistance through the Rwanda National Police in support of crime prevention programmes resulting in the creation of anti-crime clubs in schools and communities. The resurgence of genocide ideology among students has prompted the Government of Rwanda to act and propose awareness programmes in secondary schools. One of the features of the Rwanda National Police programme is the direct involvement of the youth in crime prevention and reduction through training and public debates.

13. In 2010, the Government, through the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, commissioned and produced the first reconciliation barometer with support from the United Nations. The barometer represents a unique and innovative tool for measuring the level of trust and reconciliation of Rwanda citizens. The study revealed that there have been significant improvements in terms of trust and reconciliation efforts between communities since the 1994 genocide. In the subsequent phase, the United Nations is supporting the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission to produce a follow-up study and to explore policy actions needed to further reduce occurrences of genocide related crimes.

14. In the area of justice, the United Nations is committed to providing support for the closing of the Gacaca processes, and will continue to contribute to the work of documenting and honouring the memories of the genocide victims. The Gacaca jurisdictions were created in 2001 in response to the need for timely handling of judicial files and clearing the case backlog. They were given the responsibility of handling the biggest part of the penal issues related to the genocide and to judge the category 2 and 3 suspects, while the classical jurisdictions dealt only with cases concerning the category 1 accused. Genocide defendants have been classified in several categories, with category 1 principally pertaining to planners, organizers,

instigators and supervisors of the genocide; category 2 to authors, co-authors, accomplices of deliberate homicides, or of serious attacks that caused someone's death; and category 3 to those who committed criminal acts or became accomplice of serious attacks, without the intention of causing death.

15. In 2010, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture provided ongoing funding to two Rwandan non-governmental organizations (NGOs) — Kanyarwanda and Rwanda Women's Network. With that funding, those NGOs continued to provide medical, legal, psychological and social assistance to more than 1,000 victims of torture and members of their families from the 1994 genocide in the Kigali and Bugesera areas. The activities undertaken by the NGOs with the support of the Fund consisted, inter alia, of providing anti-retroviral treatment and nutritional support to women victims of torture and mass rape; psychological counselling, including home visits to those victims that manifest signs of deep trauma; and intensive therapies around the commemorative month of April each year. Additional medical care and assistance was also provided to people with complications resulting from side effects of anti-retroviral drugs. Moreover, Kanyarwanda has supported several thematic self-help groups, especially for victims who had a child as a result of rape. In this connection, psychological assistance was provided to mitigate the traumatic sequel with the aim to reconcile mothers with the unwanted children. In addition, travel expenses to attend therapeutic sessions and hospital costs were covered with the grants from the Fund. One important initiative was the participation of all United Nations staff in the "One dollar campaign" in 2009, a fund-raising activity for the orphans of the genocide.

16. The United Nations has also provided support to the Association of Genocide Widows (AVEGA) to facilitate training activities on a variety of areas, including counselling and basic knowledge and information sharing. The victims of the 1994 genocide have been empowered to be hired to provide technical support to a leading national security institution, the Rwanda National Police, to effectively respond to the needs of the victims of sexual-based violence. This is an indication that members of AVEGA who started as vulnerable victims have been empowered not only to be survivors but also as important actors in addressing sexual and gender-based violence.

17. In terms of economic empowerment, the United Nations continues to support capacity-building initiatives of AVEGA members and Benimpuhwe associations to develop and enhance their skills in handicrafts and the production of the Agaseke baskets (peace baskets) for export. This initiative has proven to be one of the key success strategies in addressing sexual and gender-based violence, since poverty is one of the predisposing factors of vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence.

18. The United Nations is also supporting AVEGA through a project aimed at building capacity of paralegals in property and inheritance rights through sensitization of members and beneficiaries of AVEGA who are living with HIV/AIDS, about their property and inheritance rights, and at providing legal assistance to victims relating to property and succession disputes.

19. In terms of support to children, the United Nations supports the association Uyisenga n'Imanzi, which is involved mainly in raising awareness and the resolution of mental health problems of child survivors of the genocide. This support, which is given through the Ministry of Health, has enabled the NGO to train about 50 child-

headed households, orphans of the genocide, in the field of trauma management, prevention, reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

20. Each year, the Federation of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSA) reaches out to communities affected by the trauma of the 1994 genocide as part of its contribution to the national healing process. In 2010, representatives of the Federation visited the genocide memorial of Nyamata and made financial and in kind contributions to a household composed of 38 genocide survivors.

21. The United Nations is committed to further partnering with the Government of Rwanda in the reconciliation process and in supporting the survivors of the genocide.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

22. Despite the remarkable progress in peace and stability made by Rwanda since 1994, which has translated into improved economic performance, the country still faces challenges to sustain these gains and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The Government of Rwanda has made achievement of the Millennium Development Goals central to its policy framework, as defined in the economic development and poverty reduction strategy for 2008-2012. The Government continues to demonstrate strong leadership and ownership of the development processes by implementing several mechanisms to enhance aid effectiveness and coordination among development partners and by facilitating a favourable environment for effective development cooperation. This provides a tremendous opportunity for the United Nations and indeed development partners in general to support the Government in its efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations system in Rwanda is a strong partner of the Government in its determination to assure a bright future for the people of Rwanda. In this regard, the United Nations will continue to provide the relevant strategic advice and support to national efforts in consolidating the gains so far made in ensuring peace and reconciliation, the rule of law, human rights and shared economic growth, as well as the efficient provision of and access to basic social services, particularly for the most vulnerable.

23. The selection of Rwanda as one of the eight pilot countries for the "Delivering as One" approach in 2007 led to the preparation of the second United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for implementation under the approach. This further consolidated United Nations support to the country, enhancing coherence and the efficiency of its operations. The current UNDAF cycle comes to an end in 2012 and, in view of the next UNDAF cycle commencing in 2013, the United Nations country team is starting the planning processes related to the development of the next UNDAF, which is also closely tied to the review of the economic development and poverty reduction strategy. Within this context, the "Delivering as One" initiative is committed to ensuring that the next United Nations Development Assistance Plan (2013-2017) is fully aligned with the national planning processes and the priorities set out in the second economic development and poverty reduction strategy. Alignment with Government priorities identified in the next economic development and poverty reduction strategy will provide an important opportunity for the United Nations system in Rwanda to show its commitment to the principles and practices of the Paris Declaration and the Accra

Agenda for Action. Alignment with government priorities will also help strengthen the role of United Nations agencies in processes of donor harmonization, donor coordination and division of labour.

24. Within the overall framework of support, interventions for genocide survivors include improving access to justice and witness protection programmes; promoting the participation of children, young people and women in the democratic process, including participation in decision-making at the national and local levels; improving access to quality preventive, curative, promotional and rehabilitative services, especially to victims of sexual violence, HIV-positive persons, children and women; enhancing trauma and psychological programmes; and promoting effective safety nets for the protection of the most vulnerable groups.

25. Further areas of support include enhancing housing and associated amenities for vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, returnees and the internally displaced. Assistance is also provided for livelihood initiatives, orphans and vulnerable children, protection against gender-based violence, and the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive social and economic policies in favour of the poor and disadvantaged.

26. Supporting groups to build sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises and other income-generating activities through capacity-building, microcredit and access to markets remains a priority for self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation. In addition, support to special initiatives to address the needs of those who have experienced physical injuries that have resulted in mental and/or physical disabilities is critical, as is support for ageing genocide survivors.